

Delaware Byways Application

## **WESTERN SUSSEX BYWAY**



**Submitted to:**

Delaware Department of Transportation  
Delaware Byways Program

**Sponsored by:**

Western Sussex Byway Citizens Committee through Sussex County

**Center for Historic Architecture and Design  
University of Delaware**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The proposed Western Sussex Byway (Byway) extends approximately 35 miles along several roads in western Sussex County, from the exit for Route 20 to Bridgeville Road on US 13, passing through Seaford, Bethel, Laurel then ending at the Trap Pond State Park. The Western Sussex Byway Citizens Committee (Committee) through Sussex County are nominating this route to the Delaware Byways Program of the Delaware Department of Transportation with the assistance of the Center for Historic Architecture and Design at the University of Delaware.

The Committee did much of the early work for this nomination in 2006. They determined and mapped the route and considered several alternatives. They discussed and selected what they considered to be the major intrinsic qualities of the route and captured these in a mission statement below:

*The proposed Western Sussex Byway passes through a region prominent for its outstanding historic, scenic, and natural features will help promote a strong tourist-based economic growth that is derived from its old-town charm and natural environment. Offering views of clean waterways and green open spaces, the historic, scenic and natural qualities make the proposed Byway a haven for biking, hiking, driving and other recreational activities. The goals for this route include developing well-equipped interpretive centers for visitors and residents that will tell the story of the region, and promoting developments that are respectful of the area's character.*

According to the Delaware Byways Program Guidelines, “a Byway is a transportation route which is adjacent to or travels through an area that has particular intrinsic scenic, historic, natural, cultural, recreational or archeological qualities. It is a road corridor that offers an alternative route to our major

highways, while telling a story about Delaware’s heritage, recreational activities or beauty.”

Patterned after the National Scenic Byways Program, the Delaware Byways Program, administered by the Delaware Department of Transportation (DELDOT), seeks to recognize and preserve byways in Delaware that showcase the natural beauty and unique features of the state and foster the preservation of natural, cultural, and historic resources, while benefiting economic development through tourism and recreational opportunities.

### **OVERVIEW OF THE PROPOSED WESTERN SUSSEX BYWAY AND ITS LAND USE CONTEXT**

This proposed Byway moves through an area that is rich in the history of transportation and economic interests of the region. Although the western Sussex County landscape may at first seem to be a quiet and subdued rural area with small towns, it encompasses many of Delaware’s historic treasures and important natural features. Visually, the route alternates between farmlands, wooded areas, and small towns, providing a variety of views and different types of landscapes. There are many recreational opportunities for hiking, bicycling, boating, and other activities.

The three towns and other sites along the route also relate to many historic themes in the area. Seaford, Bethel, and Laurel, are all located along major water routes that made them important centers for trade and shipbuilding from the Colonial period through the nineteenth century. Bethel and Seaford, especially, were known for their shipbuilding trade. After the introduction of the railroad in 1856, Seaford and Laurel, both of which had stops along the line, gained access to large northern markets for their agricultural and maritime products, such as oysters, fruit, and baskets. Because of the prosperity generated

by the various industries, these three towns provide many examples of vernacular architecture in the homes built by wealthy residents, and are perfect examples of the evolution of industry and culture in rural Delaware.

The route also includes reminders of a darker chapter in Delaware's history: its status as a slave state through the Civil War. The route contains echoes of both the evils of the institution and the struggle for freedom: whereas it passes the only known residence for enslaved people still standing in Delaware and also relates to the history of notorious kidnapper Patty Cannon, it was also a known stop along the way for many African-American freedom seekers escaping enslavement elsewhere on the Delmarva Peninsula.

Overall, the land use of the corridor is predominantly rural agriculture with farmsteads, forest and historic small towns. There is very little dispersed, residential or commercial suburban-type development in the corridor.

## **INTRINSIC QUALITY RESOURCE INVENTORY AND EVALUATION**

The Delaware Byways Program requires that a route be nominated and qualify on the basis of its primary, or most outstanding, Intrinsic Quality (IQ), which for the proposed Western Sussex Byway is *historic*. The route passes through a landscape that illustrates many aspects of the area's agricultural and transportation history. Although this route is being nominated on the basis of its superb historic intrinsic quality, the route is unique because 4 other intrinsic quality categories are nearly as distinctive, namely scenic, natural, cultural, and recreational. It is the interplay between them all that lends the route a unique character as an engaging potential Byway.

### **Intrinsic Qualities in a "Layered" Landscape**

The Western Sussex Byway is unique in the vast array of rich IQs that it offers; although the primary quality is historic, many of the others are just as strong. The five

IQs present in the route interact with one another to present the complete story of the area. This is best appreciated by thinking about the corridor through which the route travels as a “layered” landscape. The first layer is the natural landscape, the ecological environment or stage on which history is played out and modified by humans. Predating the arrival of humans, the natural layer includes geologic formations, fossils, landforms, water bodies, vegetation and wildlife.<sup>1</sup> It, of course, evolves in response to human activities. The next layer is historical, consisting of natural and human features of the landscape, such as buildings, settlement patterns, and land use patterns reflecting the historical development of the area, which has evolved based on the natural resources present in the landscape. These features should have sufficient historic significance and visual quality to educate the traveler and to stir an appreciation for and speculation about the past.

Cultural intrinsic IQs are about human values and how they are reflected in physical features or activities on the landscape along the road. For example, the churches along the proposed Sussex route, in addition to their status as historic buildings, reflect religious values and the culture of the communities through which the route travels. In the same way, the presence of official nature preserves, which are natural features, reflect a cultural value placed on preserving nature and could be considered cultural features. But they may also include activities or festivals that celebrate aspects of a community’s life, like the annual Nanticoke River Festival in Seaford and the Strawberry Festival in Laurel each May. Cultural IQs are, then, a way of looking at and interpreting the physical features of natural and historic resources.

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<sup>1</sup> National Scenic Byways Program, *Byways Beginnings: Understanding, Inventorying and Evaluating a Byway’s Intrinsic Qualities*, (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1999), p.20

The Scenic IQ, the heightened visual experience derived from the view of natural and man-made elements of the visual environment, is where the historic, natural, and cultural qualities come together to provide a striking visual experience. Because it is subjective—what is beauty? —Scenic is difficult to measure. It is described with words like intactness, variety, color, and contrast. A scenic road is one in which there is a continuity of visually outstanding features, including views and vistas that stand to represent, unique, or distinct characteristics of an area. The scenic IQ of the proposed Western Sussex Byway is not a layer that covers the whole route, but rather appears in places along the route where historic and natural features come together in a visually pleasing and striking way.

Recreational IQs are outdoor recreational activities associated with and dependent on the historical, natural, cultural, and scenic features of the route. In addition to driving the route, activities can include biking, canoeing, kayaking, boating, fishing, camping and hiking. Bird watching is a popular recreational activity in the corridor, as it lies under a major eastern flyway for migrating birds. Fishing is also a popular activity on the many streams including the Nanticoke River and Broad Creek. In this way, recreational quality depends on the presence of all of the other qualities to exist.

### **Primary Intrinsic Quality: Historic**

The Western Sussex Byway was conceived primarily for its strong historical intrinsic qualities and for the story the route tells about Sussex County towns in the nineteenth century. The route passes through three towns, Seaford, Bethel, and Laurel, which were first settled in the late eighteenth century and found great prosperity in booming industries in the nineteenth century. Included on the route are two National

Register Historic Districts in Bethel and Laurel, one multi-property designation of several commercial buildings in Seaford and many other individual properties that have been added to the National Register of Historic Places. The route has connections to several major historic themes that run along it, including the tale of the struggle of control of the area by the lord proprietors, transportation routes, industries that helped the towns to thrive, the architecture of the historic structures in the towns, and Sussex County's history as a slaveholding area through the Civil War. The roads that compose this route connect the various resources in a story that helps residents and visitors to understand this area.

From the first settlements in the eighteenth century and through the nineteenth century, Sussex County was shaped and influenced by available transportation routes. The first settlers in the area relied on available water routes for transportation and trade. The sites for Seaford, Bethel, and Laurel and the surrounding areas were all chosen primarily for their proximity to major water routes; Seaford was sited on the Nanticoke River and Bethel and Laurel grew up along Broad Creek, a tributary of the Nanticoke. In their earliest years, the towns were little more than wharves set up as trading posts, but as time went on, prosperity gained through trade, helped them to expand. An important feature of the water transportation in the area was Cannon's Ferry, which was founded in the 1760s and may be the oldest operating ferry in the United States. During this period, the area's culture and mindset were focused southward, as the Nanticoke River flows into the Chesapeake Bay, meaning that Sussex County residents traded primarily with Maryland and Virginia, and actually, until the establishment of the Maryland-Delaware boundary line, or Mason-Dixon line, the area along the route was considered Maryland.

Crops including tobacco and grains such as wheat and corn were important exports along these routes. Lumbers were also important exports.

The coming of the railroad to Seaford in 1856 and Laurel in 1859 brought changes to the Sussex County landscape and culture. This new form of transportation made trade with northern markets possible, which meant new ideas and influences, as well as opportunities to grow different types of crops that could be shipped quickly to markets that wanted to consume them. New crops included sweet potatoes, melons, peaches, berries, and other types of fruit. This created a major economic boost for Seaford and Laurel, which is evident today in many large homes that were built in the late nineteenth century and still stand today. The Western Sussex Byway route maintains an intimate connection to this transportation history as it weaves through the landscape, crossing the railroad and the water routes several times and pointing out the routes' proximity to the population centers.

The Western Sussex Byway also relates to the many industries that have been and remain an important part of the Sussex County and Delaware economy. The most visually dominant of these is agriculture. The route passes through many vast expanses of farm fields, which are as essential to the economy today as they have been throughout the area's history. The crops that are grown have changed over time, but the visual character of the land is much the same as it was in the nineteenth century. Another important industry for Seaford and Bethel was shipbuilding, fueled by the towns' proximity to water. Bethel's shipbuilding and seafaring past is particularly evident today in the many nautical symbols that appear throughout the village on homes, churches, gravestones, and other objects and structures. Milling was another industry that grew up in response to

available water, which powered the mills. The Hearn-Rawlins Mill, built in 1879, appears at the beginning of the route and is one of the few water-powered grist mills still operating in the state. One of the major historical industries in Laurel was basket making, traces of which survive in the wooden sheds that appear on one of the route's side excursions in the town. These are only some of the industries that appear along the route, telling the story of the area's economic history.

Structures from many different eras survive along the route, helping to chart the architectural history of the area. The oldest of these structures is the Cannon-Maston House near Seaford, built in 1727 and enlarged in 1733. This house was built during a time when the border between Maryland and Delaware was in dispute, and this part of Sussex County was considered to be part of Maryland. In its layout, the house is much more closely related to structures being built in Maryland at the time than to homes that were being built in Delaware.

Other notable structures appear throughout the route. The Governor Ross Mansion in Seaford is a particularly fine example of an Italianate-style mansion. Built in 1856, the huge mansion and the romantic approach to it typify homes for wealthy landowners. In downtown Seaford, several commercial buildings have been placed on the National Register as a group for their integrity as nineteenth-century structures. The entire town of Bethel has been named a Historic District. Many of Bethel's clapboard houses were built by the mariners who learned their carpentry skills in the village's shipyards. Although the interiors of some of these historic structures have been altered, the ones that survive tell the story of this small town's place in nineteenth-century folk architecture. Much of Laurel has also been designated as a historic district, the largest in

Delaware, with its grand old homes that date to the period of prosperity in the late nineteenth century. And notably, Laurel is home to 4 Delaware Governors. Most of the residential structures in the district have evolved in some way from a Georgian floor plan, with three or five bays and a side or central hallway, and use Greek Revival, Italianate, Gothic Revival or Queen Anne decorative elements. There is a high emphasis on carved decoration and on Palladian-style windows, which appear on many of the houses regardless of the overall architectural theme. The historic commercial buildings are also an important part of Laurel's townscape, and those along Market Street date after 1889, when a raging fire destroyed the business district. Most of these structures are made of brick, reflecting the town's new consciousness of the need for fireproof materials. Driving through the Western Sussex Byway offers many opportunities to study historic architecture.

Finally, it must be noted that this area of Sussex County has many associations with the history of slavery in Delaware. Delaware was a slave state through the Civil War until the institution was abolished through the Thirteenth Amendment, which Delaware refused to ratify until 1901. The Ross Plantation in Seaford, notable for its Italianate mansion, is also the site of the only known slave dwelling to exist in the state. Governor Ross had fourteen slaves, a particularly large number for the 1850s in Delaware, and when the Civil War came, his Southern sympathies forced him to leave the country for Europe until the war was over. Patty Cannon and her gang, who kidnapped free blacks and enslaved people from their homes in Delaware to sell them to slavery, also haunted this area. Her scheme has been likened to a "reverse Underground Railroad." Although Patty was hated and feared by African Americans in the area, the real Underground

Railroad is known to have passed through western Sussex County at least a few times, and freedom seekers are known to have escaped from their enslavers in Seaford. When the Civil War came, trade influences on the area from the North and the South meant that residents were divided in their opinions. In Laurel, one of the two militia companies joined the Union army, while the other fought for the Confederacy. The governor of Delaware during the Civil War was William Cannon, distantly related to Patty Cannon and to local landowners Isaac and Jacob Cannon, who kept the state loyal to the Union during the war with his strongly pro-Union sympathies. Because of the many influences from different sources on the area, southern Delaware was extremely divided over slavery and the war, and extremes can be found even within families. The Western Sussex Byway provides insight into this sobering subject as it passes through a historic landscape.

### **Second Intrinsic Quality: Scenic**

Scenic quality is the second strongest IQ on the Western Sussex Byway. From farm fields and townscapes to broad river vistas and wooded areas, there are many opportunities to observe striking visual quality on the Western Sussex Byway. Because the route travels past woods, crops, rivers, and fields, changes in season and weather have a marked effect on the color and texture of the landscape. Whether the traveler is experiencing the delicate new growth and young crops of spring, the lush greens of summer, the harvest-time crops and changing colors of fall, or the stark contrasts of winter, the Western Sussex Byway offers views that capture the eye. The flat expanses of farms offer a distinct visual contrast to segments enclosed by trees and historic small

towns that provide variety in visual experience in addition to their contribution in other areas of intrinsic quality.

The route travels through a primarily agricultural area. Passing through many farms and an assortment of crops creates variety. Long, low, and often white outbuildings mark poultry farms. Sod farms offer fields of lush green stretching back to the tree line on the horizon. Melons appear between Woodland Ferry and Bethel, providing visual interest. On many of the farms, huge systems of pipes that are attached to wheeled dollies spread across the fields. These insect-like machines are irrigation systems, and they work as a visual symbol of the route. While the crops are in season, the stages of the growing process provide constantly changing views, and in the winter, many of the fields are covered in winter wheat, a coarse, low crop used to protect the soil from the elements. Some of the fields stand untilled for a year or more, giving an opportunity for warm season grasses to grow. Agricultural views are an important part of segments 1, 3, 4, 6, and 7 of the route.

Another major visual component of the Western Sussex Byway is provided by the natural and wooded areas along the road, through which trees help to create a tunnel effect, with both filtered and enclosed views. The many species of trees in these sections create patterns of color with different varieties of trees standing out at different times of the year. For instance, the most striking trees in winter along the Western Sussex Byway are the American holly, with shiny green leaves, and the varieties of beech tree, which keep their apricot-colored leaves throughout the cold months. Forests of evergreen trees planted by lumber companies are also a dominant sight in the wooded areas of the route. Wooded sections appear in segments 1, 3, and 6.

Water is an important part of the route's scenic character in every segment it spans. At various times, the route crosses the Nanticoke River, Broad Creek, and several tributaries of these two major waterways, providing vistas of the water routes that helped to shape this area. The Nanticoke River crossing at Woodland Ferry is one of the most striking views of all, providing beautiful, sweeping scenery up and down the broad river that has a different palette of colors at different times of the day. Hearn's Pond and Chipman's Pond are two enclosed bodies of water that also add visual character to the route.

Finally, the towns along the route offer streetscapes that include many historic structures and vignettes of small town life. Seaford's commercial buildings showcase a blend of several different architectural styles, and the drive down High Street showcases the town's organization around its main street. Bethel offers a quaint look back into the nineteenth-century shipbuilding center that it once was, with houses built by mariners that add to the village's character. Laurel, with its huge and often brightly painted Victorian homes, provide constant stimulation for the eyes in the intricate details of carved elements and inventive window types. The three towns provide a visual break from the surrounding landscape, resulting in a route that offers a great variety of environments, with contrast among the segments and colors that change frequently. The landscape along the route visually illustrates the continued relationship between the built and natural environment.

### **Third Intrinsic Quality: Cultural**

The Western Sussex Byway is shaped as much by its cultural qualities as the other intrinsic qualities. The route passes through large, sprawling farms dotted with small

towns, shaped by a culture that still considers agriculture to be one of its most important industries and also places importance on the values of small rural communities. The small-town atmosphere and historic character of Seaford and Laurel are communicated by their historic main streets with Victorian architecture and a small scale that allows residents to walk to most parts of the towns. Bethel's nineteenth century history of shipbuilding and maritime trade is reflected in its location on Broad Creek and is reinforced by nautical symbols throughout the town from gravestones to houses.

Churches are another important cultural feature along the proposed route. They stand as important symbols of both the history and religious values of the area. Most of the churches along the route are Methodist churches, which became popular in Southern Delaware in the early nineteenth century as part of the national movement toward religious revival and evangelism. The town of Bethel was even named after its Methodist church. There are also important Episcopal churches along the route. The most significant is Old Christ Protestant Episcopal Church in Laurel, which was built in 1771 and is one of only about a dozen churches in the nation that survived from the colonial era.

Preservation is an important cultural theme of the Western Sussex Byway. Many of the resources along the route are still visible today because of efforts made to preserve them. All three towns have placed properties on the National Register, with Laurel devoting an entire district, Bethel nominated as an entire town, and Seaford selecting several historically intact commercial buildings for a group nomination. This need to preserve a town story is reflected in museums along the route, the Seaford Museum, the Bethel Heritage Museum, and the Cook House in Laurel, which are devoted to

remembering important events and trends in the area's past. Much of the natural landscape has also been preserved in the form of wildlife areas and nature preserves.

The towns along the Western Sussex Byway celebrate a number of festivals that commemorate some aspect of the area's culture. In Seaford, the Nanticoke River Festival is held every July and includes such diverse events as a canoe and kayaking race and a bicycle tour of the area. Seaford's Harvest Days event in November is an opportunity for families to gather for a day of art, culture, and crafts. Holiday celebrations in Seaford include a Halloween parade, a Christmas parade, and Victorian Christmas at the Ross Mansion, which includes carriage rides and craft demonstrations. In Bethel, Bethel Heritage Days are held throughout the year, with various activities to explore aspects of Bethel's history. A Bethel House Tour is held every December to provide access to some of the buildings in the historic district. In Laurel, a strawberry festival is held each May and an old-fashioned Independence Day celebration is held each July.

#### **Fourth Intrinsic Quality: Natural**

The most striking first impression of the landscape of northwestern Sussex County may be its flatness, a feature emphasized by the extensive open croplands bordered by forests in the distance. The level topography reflects its location on the Atlantic coastal plain—a flat, sandy area with very few or no hills between the hilly Piedmont to the west and the Atlantic Ocean to the east. The Delmarva Peninsula is like a big 200-mile long sandbar created at the end of the Pleistocene as the mighty Susquehanna river rushed into the Atlantic.

Coming in a close second as the most impressive natural feature seen by the traveler is water. This feature is most remarkable where one crosses the broad Nanticoke

River on the Woodland Ferry. Water is also very noticeable on the route at the crossing of Broad Creek bordering the Bethel segment. The presence of water is explained by its inclusion in the Delmarva Peninsula (a portmanteau of the letters of the states that occupy it). About 180 by 60 miles, the Delmarva Peninsula is bordered by the Chesapeake Bay on the west, and the Delaware River, Delaware Bay, and Atlantic Ocean on the east. Since its northern isthmus is cut through by the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal, the peninsula is effectively an island. (Neither entry nor exit to the peninsula can be made without crossing a body of water). Although located in the State of Delaware, the area through which the proposed Western Sussex Byway travels is part of the Chesapeake Bay drainage basin and includes the watersheds of the Nanticoke River, Gum Branch, Gravelly Branch, and Broad Creek.

Vegetation, trees and crops comprise the third key natural feature of the route. Heavily forested before the arrival of Europeans in the 1630s, while still the home of Nanticoke Indians, the area remained predominately forested well into the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Lumbering and forest-related activities were already important economic factors then. Over time, fields were opened by agriculture, starting from small ones for tobacco in the 18<sup>th</sup> century to larger ones as agriculture changed and farms became larger during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The extensive open fields came with the agricultural boom brought by access to northern city markets by the railroad and steamship in the second half of the nineteenth century. The present openness of the fields came about in the second quarter of the last century as tractors and mechanized equipment became common. Thanks to preservation efforts, substantial forested areas, however, remain intact along the major streams and hilly areas.

Because of the combination of soils and climate, this area is one of the most ecologically diverse in the United States in terms of plant species and agricultural potential. It is also the northern most habitat for bald cypress in the continental United States. On the Western Sussex Byway, tilled fields alternate with more natural areas: fields that have not been tilled for a year or more and forested areas. The untilled fields are dominated by warm season grasses, and the forests are made up primarily of oaks and pines, with the most visibly striking types of trees being American holly and beech.

#### **Fourth Intrinsic Quality: Recreational**

The Western Sussex Byway encompasses various resources and features that contribute to the theme of recreation. These recreational activities are dependent on the natural and cultural elements of the landscape. All of the recreational activities along the route would not be feasible without the plethora of natural elements such as wooded areas and waterways along the route. The recreational qualities of the route exist in context with the other categories, stemming from the other resources that are present along the route.

Sites of recreational IQs begin to appear immediately on Hearn's Pond where one can canoe and kayak. Recreational opportunities continue the remainder of the route. Water-based recreation is possible due to the rivers and streams. It includes activities as fishing, boating, canoeing, and rafting. Hiking and biking trails are available throughout the route. The Chapel Branch Nature Trail and the Barnes Woods Nature Preserve have some hiking trails, and both areas are known to be excellent sites for birding. Birders may find rewarding sites throughout the route, as the whole area is part of a major flyway for migrating birds. Also on the route is the Nanticoke Wildlife Area. In addition to

preserving a section of wooded area along the route, this state-owned land provides a place where various hunting activities occur throughout the year.

Shortly after crossing the Nanticoke River on the Woodland Ferry, the Byway begins to overlap with the bicycle portion of the Southern Delaware Heritage Trail. The Southern Delaware Heritage Trail is an auto and scenic bike tour of Sussex County, which serves to highlight some key features of the county. More information about the Heritage Trail can be found at: <http://www.visitsoutherndelaware.com/heritage.htm>. The Western Sussex Byway shares a goal with the Heritage Trail, providing travelers with an opportunity to experience some of the hidden treasures of Seaford, Bethel, Laurel, and the surrounding area. Also, when the John Smith Water Trail, the only designated water trail in the National Park System, is completed, the Byway will intersect with the Delaware portion of that distinguished route.

### **TRAVELER'S EXPERIENCE OF THE WESTERN SUSSEX BYWAY**

The proposed Western Sussex Byway runs approximately 35 miles along several roads in Western Sussex County, from the exit for Route 20 to Bridgeville Road from US 13 South all the way to the Trap Pond State Park. The study corridor of this nomination includes how far one can see on from the centerline of the road, or when the road is enclosed by vegetation, an area roughly a quarter mile from the road. The corridor can be divided into seven distinct section based on landscape and land use characteristics.

*Segment 1: US 13 and Hearn's Pond/Atlanta Road /Ross Station Road*

*Segment 2: Seaford*

*Segment 3: Woodland and Woodland Ferry Roads*

*Segment 4: Woodland Ferry Road – Farmlands*

*Segment 5: Bethel Road and Main Street – Town of Bethel*

*Segment 6: South Shell Bridge Road/Portsville Road/West 6<sup>th</sup> Street*

*Segment 7: Laurel to the Trap Pond State Park*

### **The Specific Route of the Proposed Western Sussex Byway**

(This description represents the main concourse; more elaborate route descriptions for each of the municipalities provided separately)

1. From **US 13 South**, the route starts at the exit for **Route 20** to **Bridgeville Road**. Continuing south, make an immediate right to **Hearns Pond Road** just past the Hearns Mill. Passing a series of farms before the road ends and makes a left to
2. **Wesley Church Road**. At this road, the traveler makes a right onto
3. **Atlanta Road** and travels .6 mile to get to the Cannon-Maston House. The traveler should drive around the building and retrace the route back onto Atlanta Road. The traveler stays on Atlanta Road for 1.4 miles then turns left onto
4. **Ross Station Road**. Here, the traveler can visit the Governor Ross Mansion and Plantation. The mansion is accessible to the public. Right across is the The Elms house – a house built in the 1800's for the son of Governor Ross - James Jefferson Ross. The Elms, however, is not open to the public.
5. The route then makes a left onto **Market Street Extended** which eventually becomes
6. **Market Street**, which leads into the City of Seaford.
7. Next, the route turns right onto **High Street**. traveling southwesterly through Seaford's commercial district.
8. High St. becomes **Pennsylvania Avenue** after crossing the railroad. The route then makes a left onto
9. **Nylon Boulevard** then a quick right turn onto **Harrington Street**, and then another quick right turn onto **Woodland Road**.
10. Traveling southwesterly, the route continues on **Woodland Road** for some time as it winds through a forest landscape, and then turns left onto
11. **Woodland Ferry Road** where Woodland Road ends. *(If the message for Woodland Ferry states that the Ferry is Closed, the traveler must reverse the route, and continue east until High Street intersects with Market Street in downtown Seaford. Turn right on Market Street, then merge right onto Front Street. Follow for a few miles, then turn right onto Bethel Road and follow two miles into the town of Bethel).*
12. Woodland Ferry Road passes through the village of Woodland and leads to Woodland Ferry, which carries the traveler over the Nanticoke River.

13. After the ferry, the traveler continues southeast through more woodland and farmland before making a right onto **Bethel Road**.
14. Bethel Road passes through the town of Bethel, and then shortly after crossing Broad Creek, the route turns left onto
15. **South Shell Bridge Road**. South Shell Bridge Road will fork and the route will bear right to follow **Phillips Landing Road** for 2.2 miles. Phillips Landing Road ends at the Nanticoke River where the traveler can relax and unwind. From there, the traveler should turn around, retrace Phillips Landing Road, a short portion of South Shell Bridge Road and then turn right onto
16. **Portsville Road**. The route will continue on this road for a while as it winds through more farmlands, gradually becoming more residential
17. At the boundary of the town of Laurel, the road becomes **West 6<sup>th</sup> Street**. The route bears left onto **Townsend Street** and another left onto **West Street**.
18. West Street becomes **Market Street** after crossing the railroad tracks. Shortly after, the route turns right onto
19. **South Central Avenue** where the route continues for several blocks then make a right onto
20. **10th Street**. The route only stays here for a couple of blocks before turning right on to **West Street** then right again onto
21. **6<sup>th</sup> Street**. From 6<sup>th</sup> Street, the route turns left onto
22. **Pine Street**. From Pine Street, make a right onto **4<sup>th</sup> Street** and then left onto **Willow Street**. Here at the corner of Willow Street and 4<sup>th</sup> Street is the historic Cook House which presently houses the Laurel Historical Society. From Willow, the route turns right onto
23. **Delaware Avenue**. The route continues on Delaware Avenue, crosses US 13 and then make a right on
24. **Chipmans Pond Road**. This road will take the traveler to the historic Old Christ Church. From Chipmans Pond Road, the route turns right onto
25. **Christ Church Road**. At the end of this road, the route turns left onto
26. **Laurel Road or State Route 24**.

27. The route will continue on Laurel Road or State Route 24 then turns right onto **Trap Pond Road**. Trap Pond Road leads to the Trap Pond State Park which is the terminus of the proposed Byway.

### **Traveler's Experience Along the Western Sussex Byway**

#### **Segment One: US-13 and Hearn's Pond/Atlanta/Ross Station Roads**



This segment begins on US-13, from the exit for Route 20 to Bridgeville Highway. Just past the historic grist mill, make an immediate right to Hearn's Pond Road. All three roads are straight and flat. The first historic site on Bridgeville Road is the Hearn-Rawlins Mill.

This site has had a mill on it since 1820; the first mill burned down in 1879 and was replaced shortly afterward with the present one. This mill is one of the few water-powered gristmills still operating in Delaware. The mill also introduces the themes of early agriculture and milling on the route.

Hearn's Pond Road is flanked by a residential area on one side and an agricultural landscape on the other, providing a diversity of views. The farms on this segment produce goods common to Sussex County farms, such as chickens and soybeans. The road also crosses the railroad line for the first time at Conrail Road. Shortly after passing through a short wooded area, the route turns briefly onto Wesley Church Road, and then left onto Atlanta Road (DE 30) for .6 mile to get to the Cannon-Maston House. Built in 1727 and enlarged in 1733, the Cannon-Maston House is one of Sussex County's oldest brick buildings. When the Cannon-Maston House was built, this area of Sussex County was still a part of Maryland, and it did not become a part of Delaware until American Revolution. In many of its details, the house's construction is much more typical of

Maryland styles than Delaware styles, serving as a reminder of the contentious early history of this part of the state and contentious relations between the families of the Lord Proprietors, Calvert and Penn.



Coming from the Cannon-Maston

House, the traveler then turns around and make a right onto Atlanta Road to continue the journey. This road offers wide-open views of farm fields.

After passing through the farmlands along Atlanta Road, the route makes a left onto Ross Station Road, which has much the same character with wide-open views of fields and farm buildings. On this road, there are more examples of nineteenth-century vernacular architecture. The route passes over the railroad for the second time, reminding the traveler how important this innovation was in reshaping the Western Sussex landscape.

The road alignment of this segment is straight at first, but begins to curve more as it moves away from the residential areas that dot the landscape at the beginning of Hearn Pond Road. As Hearn Pond nears Atlanta Road, the road begins to wind slowly and continues like this onto Atlanta and Ross Station Roads. There are no sharp turns but rather smooth, horizontal curves. The vertical alignment remains relatively flat.

This segment from US 13 to Ross Station Road is agricultural, with a variety of crop types, mostly low-lying. Because the land is essentially flat, and the agricultural areas are wide open, a broad expanse of sky typically dominates the viewer's field of vision. Therefore, weather—especially its effect on the area's coloring—and the seasons are important factors in the traveler's experience. Because the land in this part of Sussex County came under cultivation in the last hundred and fifty years or so, there are remaining pockets of trees behind the fields. Occasionally, a building intersperses the fields, but these are widely spaced and do not dominate the landscape to the same extent as the fields.

The segment ends on Ross Station Road just before the entrance to the Governor Ross estate.

### **Segment Two: Seaford**



This segment begins on Ross Station Road at the northern outskirts of Seaford. The road turns onto Market Street Extended and passes by the Governor Ross estate, a 1,389-acre property that includes an 1859 Italianate-style mansion, a Gothic Revival honeymoon cottage, a historic slave quarter and a number of other outbuildings. Begun in 1856, the Ross Plantation was the home of former Delaware Governor William Ross. The romantic approach to the Italianate mansion was a typical style for homes of the wealthy.

The Ross Slave Quarter was built sometime between 1856 and 1860, and housed fourteen enslaved people when it was in use. This was a noticeably large number of slaves at this point in Delaware's history as a slave state, when most farms had units of

three to six slaves at the most. As a large plantation with a large population of enslaved African Americans, the Ross Plantation represents a settlement type that was not common by the time it was built shortly before the Civil War, but the architectural and social themes it represents are present throughout the route. The property is well preserved and one of the most visually pleasing elements in this segment of the route. Just across the entrance to the mansion, is what is known as The Elms house. Governor Ross had this house constructed for his son, James Jefferson Ross. Prior to the completion of The Elms, the younger Ross lived in the honeymoon cottage right at the entrance to the mansion.

Continuing on Market St. Extended, the route passes 3 of the 5 Seaford public schools and the Odd Fellows' Cemetery before it passes into the heart of Seaford. Seaford's location on the northern bank of the Nanticoke River



made it a prime location for travel and trade in the nineteenth century. Oyster packing, one of Seaford's most important industries, flourished by virtue of the water route from the Chesapeake oyster beds and the railroad, which allowed for fast delivery to northern markets. The small town landscape provides a distinct contrast to the previous section. There are buildings of a variety of styles and ages, and a recent downtown revitalization effort has heightened Seaford's small town flavor.

If the traveler chooses to make a detour by turning left onto Poplar St., they can pass St. Luke's Protestant Episcopal Church. St. Luke's was built in 1843 on the site of

the former church of the same name. The Gothic Revival structure is a faithful representation of English country church architecture and is in a high state of preservation. From Market St., the route turns right onto High St. and passes into the Seaford commercial district. A number of commercial buildings in Seaford are on the National Register of Historic Places as a group. All of these buildings demonstrate examples of late nineteenth- and early twentieth- century architecture. The views along High St. demonstrate both historic and scenic quality; historic because of their significance in telling the story of nineteenth-century Seaford, and scenic because the wide variety of building types offers varied and interesting views.



At the end of the commercial district, the traveler has one more option for a side route in the Seaford segment. By making a left onto New St., they can drive down to the Seaford Railroad Complex, to see Seaford's historic rail station, built c. 1856. The rail station is a reminder of the importance of the railroad to the Western Sussex area; after it was built, new trade routes opened northward, and these new routes helped to change the character of the area's agricultural production. In addition, any town that secured a rail station was guaranteed designation as an important trade center, and Seaford benefited from the resulting prosperity. In addition to the rail station, this side route offers an opportunity to stop and view the Nanticoke River, Seaford's first important trade route. After returning to the main route, the road crosses the railroad line and becomes Pennsylvania Avenue; here, the views are more residential.

At the end of Pennsylvania Ave., the route makes a left onto Nylon Boulevard, a divided road with a grassy median running down the center of it. The route then makes a quick right onto Harrington Street and another right onto Woodland Road. This final part of the Seaford segment passes the former DuPont Nylon Plant (now Invista), which contributed to Seaford's prosperity in the mid-twentieth century and gave it the nickname "the Nylon Capital of the World". The segment ends at the intersection of Woodland Road and Sussex Road, just before the sign for Woodland Ferry. The roads in this section all have a straight horizontal alignment until the last one-half mile on Woodland Road. Woodland Road curves around the outskirts of the town as it departs Seaford. The vertical alignment for the entire section is flat.

### **Segment Three: Woodland and Woodland Ferry Roads**



This segment contains the first and only truly wooded area of the route, along with many of the best opportunities for recreation that the route has to offer. The segment begins at the sign for Woodland Ferry, announcing the feature that will be the most dominant part of the segment. Along Woodland Road, the route passes the Seaford Golf and Country Club, as well as two sites for hiking, the Chapel Branch Nature Trail and the Barnes Woods Nature Preserve. In addition to hiking, both of these trails offer ample opportunities for bird watching. Along Woodland Road, the route is marked by trees creating a "tunnel" effect, with occasional filtered views of homes and creeks along the way. All of these views give the segment a strong, natural feel.

At the end of Woodland Road, the route makes a right onto Woodland Ferry Road and passes into the village of Woodland. Although tiny, the village carries great historical significance due to its connection with the Cannon family. Members of the



Cannon family were the first to operate a ferry at this point along the Nanticoke River, calling it Cannon's Ferry. It is now called the Woodland Ferry. Jacob and Betty Cannon first opened the ferry in the 1760s, and proprietorship passed to their sons Isaac and Jacob after the older Jacob passed away.

Cannon Hall is the most prominent building in the village. Built in 1820, Cannon Hall was originally intended as a home for Jacob and his bride, but after she decided not to marry him, he never moved in, and the house stood empty for many years. The history of the Cannon proprietorship of the ferry has a violent end: in April 1843, Jacob was shot and killed on the ferry wharf by a disgruntled tenant. Isaac died a month after his brother, with the cause of death unknown. Soon after the name of the town and ferry were changed from Cannon to Woodland in order to disassociate it from the negative connotation.

Cannon's Ferry is also related to the unsavory history of Patty Cannon. Patty, distantly related to Isaac and Jacob by marriage, was the ringleader of a notorious gang of kidnappers who stole free blacks and enslaved people from their homes in the northern Delmarva Peninsula and sold them into slavery in the Deep South. Her gang operated from a tavern in what is now Reliance, Maryland, just miles away from the town of Woodland on Woodland Ferry Road. Patty's operation has been referred to as a "reverse

Underground Railroad”, enslaving the free as the Underground Railroad freed the enslaved. It is probable that Patty’s gang used Cannon’s Ferry as a shipping point along the Nanticoke for their human cargo.

The Woodland Ferry crossing provides some of the most striking scenic views of the segment, with its broad vistas of the Nanticoke River. The river, in addition to its scenic qualities, is also a recreational spot, with opportunities for boating and bird watching. After the river crossing, there are views of agricultural lands through the trees. The two roads that comprise this segment curve throughout, providing a variety of views and experiences.

#### **Segment Four: Woodland Ferry Road – Farmlands**

As the traveler exits the previous section’s forest, Segment four begins, as they turn left onto Woodland Ferry Road (just before the intersection with Beagle Club Road). After a short distance, the segment makes a right turn



onto Bethel Road. It is a largely agricultural landscape characterized by melon fields, poultry farms, irrigation systems and other farming equipment. The scenic quality is enhanced by both the open vistas of the farm fields and the smaller details in the architecture of the farm buildings and the handcrafted wooden fences. The agricultural nature of the segment presents a marked contrast from the wooded segment before it and the historic townscape that follows. The fields are on flat land with few structures and a line of winding trees in the distance. Like the first segment, this section of the route provides greatly different views depending on the season and weather, with the landscape

offering different combinations of colors and stages of the growing process depending on the time of year. This segment differs from the first segment, however, in that its horizontal alignment is straight. The segment ends at the border of the town of Bethel.

### **Segment Five: Bethel Road and Main Street – Town of Bethel**

Segment Five encompasses the historic town of Bethel. Bethel was first settled as a landing known as Lewis' Wharf in 1795, and became the bustling town of Lewisville



by the 1840s. In 1880, when the town established its first post office, the town's name was changed to Bethel. The new name came from the Methodist church, a prominent local institution. Many of the residential buildings in the town date from the nineteenth century and

are a strong link to Bethel's past. Bethel is a nineteenth-century shipbuilding and seafaring village that maintains its historic character. It was the first historic district to be named to the National Register of Historic Places in Sussex County, and only the second entire town in Delaware to be placed on the register. The town's vernacular architecture consists largely of clapboard houses that were built by mariners and ships carpenters with much the same care that they put into crafting the Chesapeake sailing rams for which the town became famous. Many of the homes have design elements that refer to Bethel's nautical history, such as door knockers that are shaped like anchors. Bethel's residents were involved in building the ships and in manning them for their Atlantic voyages, and the town retains the romantic quality that came with always looking toward the sea. Although the interiors of many of the historic structures in the town have been altered,

the carefully preserved exteriors tell the story of this small town's place in nineteenth-century folk architecture and the rugged seafaring life that characterized its inhabitants. The surviving structures are valuable for their scenic and their historic quality.

An optional detour for the traveler is to head down Main St. and into the heart of the historic district. This gives the opportunity to view more of the town's buildings and to get a feel for the character of the district. The main route in this segment is mostly straight, curving only gently just before the river crossing. The segment ends just after Main Street crosses Broad Creek, allowing for strong views up and down the creek that was so important to Bethel's industries.

#### **Segment Six: South Shell Bridge Road/Portsville Road/West 6<sup>th</sup> Street**



Segment Six repeats many of the visual themes that have already appeared in other segments along the route, with its combination of wooded areas and farmlands. Shortly after crossing Broad Creek, the traveler turns left onto South Shell Bridge Road. The area along this road is wooded and shares many visual characteristics with the first part of Segment Three, as the road curves through a wooded area in which the trees create a tunnel effect. There are some filtered views of homes and other structures along the road, but the trees are the dominant feature.

From South Shell Bridge Road, the route bears right and continues onto Phillips Landing Road for a little over 2.2 miles. The views on this road are mostly wooded until it ends on the Nanticoke River where the traveler can engage in some recreational activities. The route then



retraces Phillips Landing back then after about 2 miles, turns right onto Portsville Road. This road traces Broad Creek and offers some more varied views. The Broad Creek side of the road is mostly wooded while the other side is agricultural, with more views of poultry farms and irrigation systems. These views reinforce the importance of raising poultry and other types of farming in western Sussex County. The road winds through this section with some sharper curves than have characterized the previous sections. On the outskirts of Laurel, Portsville Road becomes West 6<sup>th</sup> Street. The segment ends when the road crosses a tributary of Broad Creek; this water crossing provides a visual marker that announces the beginning of the last segment of the route.

### **Segment Seven: Laurel to the Trap Pond State Park**

Laurel is the last historic town on the route. It was the site of an Indian Reservation from 1711-1769 set-up by the Maryland Assembly. Many of the structures in this town date back to the nineteenth century. This segment threads through



some roads within Laurel which offer the traveler views of the historic houses. Filtered views of Broad Creek and Records Pond are on this route. Laurel's history follows that of Seaford in some ways, with its connection to the railroad and to water routes, but Laurel, even more than Seaford, is also a market town, placing great emphasis on the production and shipping of agricultural products, such as melons. The town's historic prosperity is evident in its elaborate houses.

A large section of the town has been recognized as a historic district by the National Register of Historic Places due to the great number of historic structures that

represent many different trends in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century architectural history. Most of the residential structures in the district have evolved in some way from a Georgian floor plan (an equal number of rooms on each side of a central hallway), with three or five bays and a side or central hallway, and use Greek revival, Italianate, Gothic revival or Queen Anne decorative elements. The historic commercial buildings are also an important part of Laurel's townscape, and those along Market Street date after 1899, when a raging fire destroyed the business district. Most of these structures are made of brick, reflecting the town's new consciousness of the need for fireproof materials. By wandering through the streets of Laurel and gazing at the historic buildings still standing, a traveler can get a sense of what it was like to live in a prosperous manufacturing town in the nineteenth century.

There are many possible routes in Laurel that can give the traveler a sense of this town's scenic and historic qualities. The proposed loop as mentioned earlier (see page 19) would give the traveler the



opportunity to see many of Laurel's historic residential buildings, with many varied examples of vernacular architecture. In addition to the historic qualities inherent in the buildings, this townscape also has a high level of scenic quality, with great variety in the types of houses and the colors used to paint them.

It is interesting to note that Laurel is home to 4 Delaware Governors, namely, Nathaniel Mitchell (1805-1808), James B. Cooper (1841-1845), Joshua H. Marvel (1895), Elbert Carvel (1949-1953 & 1961-1965). It is also the birth place of Governor Ross. As a matter of fact, the former home of Caleb Ross (father of Governor Ross) is

still standing on Delaware Avenue and is popularly known as the Spring Garden. Kendall Lewis, founder of Bethel, also lived in this house. There is also the Rosemount also on Delaware Avenue. This used to be the home of Governor Mitchell.

Today, Laurel retains its historic feel and nineteenth century appearance, and provides the traveler with a unique visual and historical experience. The town helps to bookend the Western Sussex Byway, encompassing many of the themes that dominate the highway, including travel by rail and water, processing of agricultural goods, and manufacturing. Together, these three towns and the roads that connect them illustrate the history of life in southern Delaware in the nineteenth century.

Upon leaving Laurel via Delaware Avenue, the traveler will cross US 13 and turn right onto Chipmans Pond Road to get to the historic Old Christ Church. This church is yet another fascinating finely preserved example of the region's colonial past. Construction of what was known as the "Chapel of Ease" began in 1770, at which time the area was claimed by the colony of Maryland.

From Chipmans Pond Road, the route makes a right to Christ Church Road, then left onto Laurel Road or Route 24. The route continues on this road then turns right onto Trap Pond Road. The terminus of the Byway is the Trap Pond State Park.

### **Conclusion**

Since the beginning of this project in 2006, much has changed regarding historic preservation in Sussex County. It should be noted that Sussex County Council (the official sponsor for the Byway, through which the Western Sussex Byway Citizens Committee submits this application), and the town councils of all the municipalities along the route have formally approved the continuation of the Western Sussex Byway.

Historic Landmarks have been lost, while others saved, but what still remains is the commitment of the volunteers from all these communities that work so, so hard for preservation; preservation of the built and natural landscape that combine to tell the story of the towns and farms that line this course. Without those groups and their efforts this project would not be possible.

### **Public Comments**

Many comments were gathered during the public hearing process, which was a great success, allowing people in and along the Byway to come and discuss, in great detail, how the route would affect them and what historic, cultural, recreational, scenic, and natural resources were to be included. After examination of the submitted public comments and discussions at the four public hearings, the Citizens Committee began to consider alterations to the route, that include extending the proposed corridor to several park settings. People were very optimistic and encouraging with hopes of developing eco and heritage tourism initiatives throughout; such opportunities are endless, as much of the area remains untouched by contemporary suburban developments and commercialism.

The current economic situation has presented the preservation community a unique opportunity to collaborate to take stock in the resources that have survived and inventory those lost. Projects like the Delaware Byways Program have come along to give preservation efforts the acknowledgement they truly deserve, and the ability for local groups to combine efforts for an entire region. The Western Sussex Byway represents a heritage area, intricately linked to the Nanticoke River and its tributaries, with a unique culture, that is today Western Sussex County.

There were valuable input and conversation about the area, as indicated by the public comment included in the appendices, with many experts in local history shedding light on some oversight. The public process allowed for the committee, who had been working with this project for several years, to reinvigorate and re-engage the issues presented them, and the public responded. People were very interested in beginning oral history projects, tours of all kinds; suggested more areas of interest, and posed questions about future potential. The most important part of the process is that it helps continue the conversation about preservation by giving communities an opportunity to find solutions through cooperation. The ground up, grass roots nature of the Delaware Byways Program is a great preservation tool that engages everyone from politicians, business owners, and proponents of economic development, to preservation advocates, and property owners. There was consensus to begin cooperating to preserve the deteriorating built environment.

## **APPENDIX 1: INTRINSIC QUALITY FORMS**

### **Segment 1: US 13 and Hearn's Pond/Atlanta /Ross Station Roads**

#### Historic

Hearn & Rawlins Mill (Currently the U.N.O.I. Grain Mill) from Bridgeville Road

Views of the Railroad from Ross Station Road

Cannon-Maston House (North of Seaford on Atlanta Road (RD 30) on the north side past the intersection at Bucks Branch Road (RD 560))

Wesley Church and social hall, a former 2-room school until 1930 when it was consolidated with Seaford (Atlanta Road)

#### Scenic

Views of Hearn's Pond along Bridgeville Road to Hearn's Pond Road

Agricultural, Wooded, and Residential Views along Hearn's Pond Road

Enclosed Wooded Vistas along Hearn's Pond Road

Agricultural and Wooded Views along Hearn's Pond Road

Agricultural Views along Hearn's Pond Road continuing to Atlanta Road

Agricultural and Residential Views along Ross Station Road

#### Cultural

Poultry farms

#### Natural

Hearn's Pond

## **Segment 2: Seaford**

### Historic

Ross Mansion and Plantation from Ross Station Road and Market Extended  
The Elms

#### Downtown Seaford

Edgar and Rachel Ross House (413 High Street)  
Burton's Hardware Store (405-407 High Street)  
Mt. Olivet Church (315 High Street)  
328 High St  
218 High Street  
200/202 High Street  
First National Bank (118 Pine St)  
102 Cannon Street (High and Cannon Streets)  
Seaford Museum/Old Seaford Post Office (203 High Street)  
Sussex National Bank of Seaford (130 High Street)  
Rev. George A. Hall House (110 South Conwell Street)  
Seaford Railroad Station (New Street)  
Jesse Robinson House – location along High Street  
St. Luke's Church (Front Street)  
40 & 8 Boxcar (Front Street)  
Former DuPont Nylon Plant (400 Woodland Road)

### Scenic

Townscape, including streetscape not specifically identified in the Commercial Historic Buildings  
Nomination  
Filtered views of the Nanticoke River looking down side streets  
Wrought-iron fences throughout Seaford

### Cultural

Nanticoke River Festival  
Town & County Fair  
Bicycle Race Weekend  
Annual Victorian Christmas at the Ross Mansion  
Seaford Public Library & Cultural Center

### Natural

Nanticoke River

### Recreational

Walking along the Riverwalk  
Boating, fishing, canoeing and other water sports along the Nanticoke River

### **Segment 3: Woodland and Woodland Ferry Roads**

#### Historic

Cannon Hall  
Woodland Ferry  
Patty Cannon (connection to Woodland)  
Jacob Cannon (site of murder along the Woodland side)  
Nanticoke trade history  
Woodland Methodist Church and cemetery

#### Scenic

Wooded and Partially wooded areas along Woodland Rd  
Views of Creek along Woodland Road just after Butler Branch Road (also cross-listed as recreational because of the association with bird watching)  
Woodland Ferry townscape  
Views of the Nanticoke River from Woodland Ferry  
View of the Nanticoke River  
Poultry farms along Woodland Ferry Road  
Long Open Viewshed of Belfast Farm along Woodland Ferry Road

#### Cultural

Woodland Ferry Festival  
Poultry farms along Woodland Ferry Road

#### Natural

Nanticoke River  
Chapel Branch Nature Trail along Woodland Road  
Barnes Woods Nature Preserve along Woodland Road  
Creeks along Woodland Road

#### Recreational

Seaford Golf and County Club along Woodland Road  
Chapel Branch Nature Trail along Woodland Road  
Walkers Marina along Woodland Road  
Barnes Woods Nature Preserve along Woodland Road  
Boating, canoeing, and fishing along the Nanticoke River  
Heritage Trail

#### **Segment 4: Woodland Ferry Road – Farmlands**

##### Scenic

Partially Wooded areas along Woodland Ferry Road

View of Dwellings along Woodland Ferry Road

Agricultural Views (sod fields) along Woodland Ferry Road and continuing along Bethel Road

Views of the Melon Fields along Woodland Ferry Road before turning on Bethel Road

##### Cultural

Sod farms

Melon farms

Poultry farms

##### Recreational

Heritage Trail

## **Segment 5: Bethel Road and Main Street – Town of Bethel**

### Historic

Shipbuilding and nautical features

Hastings Potato House

Bethel Townscape and Historic District

Sailor's Bethel Methodist Church and graveyard (burial site of Kendall Lewis, founder of Bethel, and his 3 wives)

Former St. Johns' Methodist Protestant (now a community center)

### Scenic

Bethel Townscape and Historic District

Views of Broad Creek

Views from Broad Creek Bridge

### Cultural

Bethel Heritage Days

Bethel Museum on First Street (former 2-room school)

Bethel House Tour (Annually during December)

### Natural

Broad Creek

### Recreational

Heritage Trail

## **Segment 6: South Shell Bridge Road/Portsville Road/West 6<sup>th</sup> Street**

### Historic

Phillips Potato House

Mt. Pleasant United Methodist Church

### Scenic

Filtered Views of Broad Creek as it joins the Nanticoke River along Bethel Road after the Broad Creek Bridge

Dwelling along Bethel Road after the Broad Creek Bridge

Enclosed wooded area on South Shell Bridge Road

Poultry Farm by the intersection of South Shell Bridge Road and Portsville Road

Agricultural views along Portsville Road

Views of a little creek along Portsville Road/ W 6<sup>th</sup> Street just before entering into Laurel

### Natural

Broad Creek and Nanticoke River

Phillips Landing

Wooded area along South Shell Bridge Road visually dominated by beech and American holly

### Recreational

Heritage trail

Possible bird watching along the Creek

## **Segment 7: Laurel**

### Historic

Concrete Four Squares along W 6<sup>th</sup> Street  
Centenary Methodist Church on Market Street  
Laurel Historic District/Townscape  
Basket making context (basket making houses across from the RR tracks)  
Christ United Methodist Church (Central Avenue)  
St. Philip's Protestant Episcopal Church (Central Avenue)  
New Zion AME (W. 6<sup>th</sup> Street)  
Mt. Pisgah AME (W. 6<sup>th</sup> Street)  
Factory workers' homes built in 1885 (10<sup>th</sup> Street)  
Cook's House (Market and Willow Streets)  
Rosemount (Delaware Avenue)  
Spring Garden (Delaware Avenue)  
Old Christ Church (Chipman's Pond Road)

### Scenic

Broad Creek  
Laurel Pond  
Laurel Historic District/Townscape  
Views of poultry farms along Christ Church Road  
Views of Chipman's Pond on Chipman's Pond Road

### Cultural

Old Fashioned Independence Day Celebration  
Strawberry Festival each May  
Laurel Public Library

### Natural

Broad Creek  
Chipman's Pond (Chipman's Pond Road)  
Bald cypress trees in Laurel River Park

### Recreational

River Park Recreational Area  
Heritage Trail  
Trap Pond State Park (very first state park)

## **APPENDIX 2: PUBLIC OUTREACH**

## **APPENDIX 3: MAPS**